

Descriptive Analysis of Unit and Item Nonresponse in the 6th National Survey on Family in Japan

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This article aims to describe the characteristics of unit and item nonresponse of the 6th National Survey on Family in Japan (NSFJ), which was conducted by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research in 2018.

Compared to the 4th (2008) and 5th round (2013), the nonresponse rates of the 6th NSFJ increased by about 4 points to 40.1%, and this was mainly due to the increase in rates of the failure to contact the respondents and distribute the questionnaires. To further assess the association between respondents' demographic or geographic attributes and survey nonresponse, we used the 2018 Comprehensive Surveys of Living Conditions (CSLC), which can be merged to the 6th NSFJ because these datasets have a common sampling frame.

By using the merged datasets of NSFJ and CSLC, we found that the association between respondents' attributes, such as age, marital status, and education, and unit nonresponse significantly differ, depending on the field work stage of the survey: (1) distribution of the questionnaires, (2) collection of the questionnaires, and (3) assessment of the valid response. In addition, item nonresponse rates, which refers to the proportions of invalid answers from the respondents, slightly increased compared to the 4th and 5th round, and the elderly or less-educated women showed a significantly higher likelihood of item nonresponse.

Based on these results, we will discuss the practical implications for the improvements of response rates in the next 7th round, including the revision of questionnaires and survey design.

Keywords: National Survey on Family in Japan (NSFJ), unit nonresponse, item nonresponse, Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions (CSLC)